

a processor for creating a postage indicium, said postage indicium including a proof of payment, for service by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount, said first party causing said transaction amount to be paid to a second party in response to at least said transactional data when said first party processes said postage indicium; and

*C1* *Cont'd*  
an output for generating said postage indicium.

*C2* 38. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

*C3* 46. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium includes a digital signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

*C4* 48. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

*C5* 51. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

*C6* 55. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a tangible medium.

C1 57. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a mail piece.

58. (Twice Amended) Postage indicium processing apparatus comprising:

a processor for processing at least one postage indicium including a proof of payment, for service by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount; and

an output responsive to at least said transactional data for causing said transaction amount to be paid to a second party when the postage indicium is processed.

59. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium appears on a mail piece.

C8 61. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said processor includes a scanner for scanning at least part of said postage indicium.

C9 63. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

C10 71. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium includes a digital signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

C11 73. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

C12 76. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

139. (Twice Amended) A method for dispensing payments comprising the steps of:

C13 creating a postage indicium, said postage indicium including, a proof of payment for service, by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount, said first party causing said transaction amount to be paid to a second party in response to at least said transactional data when said first party processes said postage indicium; and

generating said postage indicium.

C14 141. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

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149. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium includes a digital signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

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151. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

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154. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

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158. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a tangible medium.

160. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a mail piece.

161. (Twice Amended) A postage processing method comprising the steps of:

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processing at least one postage indicium including a proof of payment, for service by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount; and

causing, in response to at least said transactional data, said transaction amount to be paid to a second party when the postage indicium is processed.

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162. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium appears on a mail piece.

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165. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

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173. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium includes a "digital" signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

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175. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

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178. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

201. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.

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202. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.

203. (Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.